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Inside Information

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INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

Page

Noah Perry elected president of Southern states information officers.....	1
USDA-OI's Lillie Vincent honored for her work in women's equity.....	1
Public Affairs Council will discuss USDA agency information organizations.....	2
U of Minnesota receives \$1.9 million grant for telecommunications center.....	2
USDA reports to OMB on periodicals.....	2
Information teams in USDA gain momentum.....	3
Conservation Society launches information/education campaign.....	3
Edd Lemons, former ACE president, dies in California.....	3
ARS management team finds teleconferencing effective.....	4
University of Florida is looking for a new coordinator.....	4
Ohio State has filled several new positions.....	4

PERRY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF SAIOSDA

Noah Perry, information director for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, was elected president in mid-August of the Southern Association of Information Officers of State Departments of Agriculture.

He succeeds Larry Michaud, information director for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture.

Also elected in SAIOSDA were:

June Brotherton, public affairs director for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, reelected vice president; Ray Schreiner, information director for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, reelected secretary-treasurer; and Suzanne Midgley, director of information for the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry, elected board member-at-large.

West Virginia will be host to the next annual workshop and meeting of the group.

LILLIE VINCENT HONORED

Lillie Vincent, public affairs specialist in the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information, was honored Aug. 26 as one of five women in USDA to receive this year's Women's Equity Day award for her efforts in affirming the equality of women. She was the only public affairs officer so honored.

The award was presented at the beginning of a day-long program sponsored by the USDA unit of The Women's Action Taskforce in observance of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in August 1920, assuring women the right to vote.

Vincent has been active for several years in the creation and continuance of the Farm Women's Forum in Washington, D.C. and as liaison to several women's groups throughout the country.

HOW ARE AGENCY INFO UNITS ORGANIZED?

Organization charts of the information shops in USDA agencies will be distributed at the Tuesday, Sept. 17 meeting of the Department's Public Affairs Council (PAC).

The charts and answers to several questions about organization and function were compiled by USDA's Office of Information to provide answers to a question frequently addressed to OI: how are other agency shops organized?

"There's an enormous amount of information in the agency responses," notes Sally Katt, agenda coordinator for the PAC. Katt is a public affairs specialist in the Special Programs Division of USDA's OI.

A poll of the agencies covered such subjects as the role of the information shop in the agency's decisionmaking process, the actual function of the shop, what changes are desirable, and whether the head of the information unit is a political appointee or a career employee?

Don Girton, director of the Office of Information of the Forest Service and a member of the PAC advisory committee, will lead a discussion on the poll results.

As usual, the meeting opens at 11 a.m. in Room 104-A of USDA's Administration Building in Washington, D.C.

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MINNESOTA "SEEDED" WITH \$1.9 MILLION

The University of Minnesota has received a grant of \$1.9 million from the Kellogg Foundation to establish a telecommunications development center.

The money will be used to create a center within the University's Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics to train faculty and staff to plan, design, and deliver instructional programs that use telecommunications technologies such as radio, television, computers, and teleconferencing.

The center will have a classroom designed for videoconferencing, a laboratory equipped with computers and interactive communications devices, production studios for taping and duplicating programs, and a microwave satellite dish for connecting the university with a nearby television station.

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OMB GETS REPORT ON PERIODICALS

USDA's Office of Information has reported to the Office of Management and Budget that the Department's agencies publishes 322 so-called periodicals.

This year, for the first time, the annual report on government publications includes internal agency newsletters and annual reports. At the same time, it does away with the necessity to file requests to OMB for approval to continue such periodicals, since the reporting system now serves as the approval mechanism, notes Frank Samay, chief of publications distribution for the Publishing Division of OI.

Samay also noted that OMB is already seeking clarification of details in the report sent Aug. 15. Publishing Division totaled and forwarded reports submitted by USDA agencies, including information about periodicals in all their field offices.

Expenditures on USDA periodicals, as defined by OMB, reached \$3.8 million (all-encompassing) in 1984 in USDA, while the costs of non-recurring publications, summarized but not itemized in the report, reached \$11 million.

USDA-WIDE INFO TEAMS GAIN MOMENTUM

Two more departmentwide information teams sparked by public affairs specialists in the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information become operational Sept. 11 with inaugural meetings of the Human Nutrition Information Team and the School and Youth Directed Materials Information Team.

The human nutrition team is being convened by Lillie Vincent. Sally Katt is convening the school and youth team.

Katt said her team comprises people in USDA who are interested in the creation of materials for school and youth audiences and reaching those audiences either directly or through the trade press. Interested persons may call her at (202) 382-9435.

Vincent's team is made up of information directors and their representatives from 10 USDA agencies involved in nutrition information.

Similar information teams already on line are the International Information Team, headed by Larry Marton; the Research Information Team, headed by John Crowley; the Electronic Dissemination of Information Team, headed by Stan Prochaska, chief of Special Programs, with Russ Forte as team leader backup; the Internal Communications Team, headed by George Holcomb, editor of the newsletter USDA, and the Information Access Coordination and Administration Team (FOIA/PA), headed by Milton Sloane.

Soon to be convened by Bill Whyte is the Conservation Team.

Coordination of departmental information efforts is the overall goal of the teams. Among other activities, the international team outlined and coordinated editorial material for the 1985 Yearbook of Agriculture, while a similar effort for the 1986 Yearbook is underway in the research team.

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CONSERVATION MESSAGE LAUNCHED

The Soil Conservation Society of America has launched a national media/school campaign to stress the need for soil and water conservation.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International has contributed \$100,000 to help get the effort underway. The conservation group hopes to raise a million to two million dollars a year from other agribusiness firms over the next 5 years.

Plans call for the program to use radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and other media to help spread the conservation message.

However, Walt Peechatka, executive vice-president of the society, said the program also will concentrate on getting conservation messages into school work.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block commended the society and Pioneer for taking the lead in organizing the program.

Contact: Max Schnepf, SCSA, (515) 289-2331, or Chuck Kuster, Pioneer, (515) 245-3589.

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EDD LEMONS PASSED AWAY

Word has reached "Inside Information" that Edd Lemons, former Extension editor and head of the Department of Agriculture Information at Oklahoma State University, and former president of Agricultural Communicators in Education, died Aug. 8 in Los Robles, California at the age of 79.

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ARS MANAGEMENT IS TELECONFERENCING

Top management in the Beltsville, Md. offices of the Agricultural Research Service is using the teleconference services of USDA's Office of Information to get together electronically with 11 area administrative officers.

They were having trouble with their conference call system, explained Betty Fleming, USDA's Teleconference Center coordinator, what with echoes, bumping, disconnects, and even outsiders joining the conferences.

When a July conference scheduled for an hour and a half came to a screeching halt (well, practically) in a half hour, ARS went shopping for a new service.

The Teleconference Center in the Video & Film Division of OI provided the services they needed. Their first conference was held Aug. 13, with top management speaking from Beltsville.

At least three more such meetings are scheduled.

Contacts: Dave Smyth, audio systems specialist at the teleconference center, (202) 447-2029, to schedule an audio conference, and Betty Fleming at (202) 447-5368 for ideas on applications or help with the design of either audio or videoconferences.

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FLORIDA NEEDS A COORDINATOR

September 15 is the deadline for applying for the position of news coordinator in the editorial department of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. The position is at the level of assistant or associate professor.

Contact: JoAnn B. Pierce, acting chair, Editorial Department, G022 McCarty Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Telephone: (904) 392-1771. Electronic mailbox: AGS550.

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NEW POSITIONS FILLED AT OHIO STATE

Since becoming head of Information and Applied Communications at Ohio State University in April, Dr. Larry Whiting has filled six of 10 new positions in the department and replaced two people who retired.

The new staff includes:

Margaret Latta and Ken Chamberlain, photography: Stan Ernst and Tom Storey, news; Kurt Knebush, publications; Randy Spears and Chris Finneran, television, and Bill Warren, computer/word processing systems.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGR009 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

